

Grau's Answers to Turf Questions



If you've got a question you want Dr. Fred V. Grau to answer, please address it to Grau Q&A, Golfdom, 407 S. Dearborn, Chicago 5, Ill.

*Be not the first by which the new is tried
Nor be the last to lay the old aside.*

WITH all proper respect for the true meaning of this advice, these words applied too strictly say, in effect, "Be mediocre" or "Wait until someone else has tried it and see if it works" or "Don't pioneer".

If everyone followed this old maxim to the letter no one ever would try anything new. Robert Fulton, Ben Franklin, the Wright Brothers and other pioneers wouldn't have made their marks if they had taken this advice.

The turfgrass profession is young and lusty. Opportunities to try new things are at every hand. We commend the green chmn. and committees who encourage their supts. to try new things.

Hand in hand with trying new things goes understanding — also accuracy.

The new "tool" should be understood as to its advantages, limitations and properties. When it is used it should receive skillful, accurate handling so that its merits truly can be evaluated.

New things are presented at turfgrass conferences, national, regional, state and local. For this reason, among others, supts. and chmn. have been urged to attend conferences for educational purposes. (The best informed men in the country

present their ideas at these meetings.) Besides this, "corridor councils" bring out so many new ideas that can be tested.

If everyone at a club is kept informed of what goes on at turf conferences, a major hurdle will have been surmounted. A supt. has the privilege of keeping abreast through professional meetings and conferences. This privilege carries with it a responsibility to report new findings to others in management at the club.

Last, but not least, findings of interest to club members should be passed on to them in condensed form so that they, too, can keep abreast.

Q. Why are 100 lbs. of ground charcoal used per 1,000 sq. ft. on putting green surfaces? (Ky.)

A. It is assumed that the ground charcoal is being spread on the green surfaces in an effort to sweeten the soil and relieve compaction. Actually, ground charcoal does very little good for either of these ailments. It would do a great deal more good to thoroughly aerate the greens and topdress with a sandy loam topdressing. We haven't heard of charcoal being used on putting greens for many years.

Q. Is Cohansey practicable for growth on courses in northeast Oklahoma? (Okla.)

A. Yes, Cohansey (C-7) creeping bent is one of the best for putting greens on courses in Oklahoma and many other states. It is a vigorous grass that holds color well throughout the entire growing season, is quite highly disease resistant and, most important of all, highly heat resistant. Some of the most perfect greens in U. S. are of Cohansey bent and they are in Oklahoma.

Q. I am confused about eliminating thatch on greens. I have been led to believe, through reading various articles, never to topdress over a thatched condition as it creates layers. Now, in GOLFDOM, we read, "Topdressing of greens will aid materially in decomposing thatch accumulations". Has the trend of thought shifted? (N. Y.)

A. There is a difference between the old concept of topdressing with a very heavy layer and the more modern concept of topdressing with a very thin layer, which actually isn't a very thin layer but is so well worked in that it settles down and almost becomes a part of the turf itself. Thus it greatly stimulates development of organisms which help to reduce thatch accumulations by digesting them. It is quite true that a heavy topdressing over a badly thatched condition will definitely create layers. Since the principle of aeration combing, brushing and vertical mowing has been established, thatch and mat accumulations now are much less serious. By reducing thatch mechanically, before applying a light topdressing, bacterial decomposition of the organic material greatly is accelerated. I don't believe the trend of thought on this issue has